

the middle of a civil war where hundreds and hundreds of people are being killed each week, where we are losing soldiers at a rate that is untoward even in this war. Last month was the highest casualty rate this year. In the 51 months of the war, it is one of the highest casualty rates. So it is something for which we have to carry the wishes of the American people into legislation and change this war and bring our troops home.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 60 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the first half of the time under the control of the majority, the second half of the time under the control of the Republicans.

The Senator from Washington is recognized.

#### EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, we are now in the fifth year of the war in Iraq. Once again this year, the President failed to include an honest cost of the war in the budget he sends to Congress every year. Why is that so important at this time? If the President had initially sent to Congress a realistic budget instead of one that is intended to make his fiscal policies look less irresponsible, our men and women in the service wouldn't be faced with debate after debate after debate on emergency spending bills to pay for the cost of the war. Unfortunately, again, he did not send us a budget that was honest and paid for the war. So what we have now is an emergency spending bill for Iraq and other emergencies.

Unfortunately, last night—and sadly, in my opinion—the President decided to say no to our men and women in Iraq, to our veterans, to victims of Katrina, and to many other people who needed this measure passed and signed by him.

Democrats understand that our troops and their families should not pay for the President's budget games. That is why we passed funding for the emergency supplemental at record speed—faster, in fact, than the Republicans did in the last 2 years. Back in 2005, the Republican Congress didn't send the President emergency funding until May 10. In 2006, the Republican Congress did not send an emergency funding bill until June 15. Not only did we send the White House a bill earlier than ever, we sent legislation that con-

tained more funds than the President requested and all the money our troops need. Unfortunately for our troops, yesterday, 4 years after President Bush declared "mission accomplished" and 12 days after it was reported that 104 American servicemembers died in April, making it the deadliest month since the surge began, the President decided to veto that bill. With that, he decided to delay the funding for our troops.

Included in that bill were billions of dollars to help solve the problems facing our men and women in uniform when they return home. The President didn't ask for those critical dollars. In fact, he has never included our wounded warriors as a cost of the war. Their families and now both Houses of the Congress understand the obligation to our heroes and have included them as a cost of war in this bill.

The bill we sent to the President provided money to improve Walter Reed and other VA facilities that we know are in disrepair and money to help increase access to medical and mental health services for our returning soldiers. More than \$143 million was included to improve the VA's polytrauma center, which, among other things, would have helped the VA better diagnose and treat the increasing number of traumatic brain injuries which have emerged as a signature wound of this war.

The legislation also provided \$100 million for the VA to target areas where mental health care is lacking. According to the VA's own statistics, more than 35 percent of returning Iraqi and Afghani veterans who have sought care have done so for mental health problems. We provide the funds in the bill we sent to the President. Unfortunately, he said no.

Additionally, we put in \$61 million for hiring and training of new compensation and pension claims adjudicators. That is important money because we are hearing from far too many of our returning soldiers that it is taking them months to get the benefits they have earned. These new claims processors will help address that growing backlog of claims. Unfortunately, last night the President said no.

What we have today for our veterans, 4 years after President Bush declared "mission accomplished," he decided to veto this bill. He decided to delay funds that would have addressed the problems facing our veterans.

Not only did Democrats send the President funding earlier than ever, we listened to the military leaders, we listened to the Iraq Study Group, and we listened to the American people and included a provision to redeploy our forces from the Iraqi civil war. Americans overwhelmingly oppose the President's escalation plan. General Abizaid, General Casey, and other top former officials have made clear that a surge will not be a solution to a civil war in Iraq. Reportedly, the Joint Chiefs of Staff were not in favor of escalation,

and even Colin Powell opposes the escalation. In fact, Colin Powell, who we know saw combat in Vietnam, said:

I am not persuaded that another surge of troops into Baghdad for the purposes of suppressing this communitarian violence, this civil war, will work.

GEN John Abizaid, former commander of U.S. Central Command, said:

I do not believe that more American troops right now is a solution to this problem.

The Iraq Study Group, made up of Republicans and Democrats, called for the redeployment of our forces. But the President ignored all of them. He decided instead to escalate the number of troops in Iraq.

This escalation is in its third month, and so far the results are not promising. The Iraqi Government reported that violence from February to March increased. Officials said the number of car bombings in Baghdad is rising. According to the U.N., sectarian violence in the capital has not declined one bit. Officials have also reported that sectarian violence outside the capital has increased. As I mentioned, 104 American troops died in April—the deadliest month since this surge began.

The redeployment provision this Democratic-led Congress included in the bill provided the President with an opportunity to force Iraqis to finally take responsibility for their own country. We are in the fifth year of this war, and Iraqis have yet to stand up for themselves. They are not policing their own streets. They are not running their own army. Their Government is a mess. Something has to be done to show them they have to get their act together, they have to take ownership of their own future.

That is what the redeployment provision did in our bill. It said to Iraqis: After 5 years—5 years—and thousands of U.S. lives, you have to take responsibility for your future. It said: You must stand up.

Well, unfortunately, for America's security, 4 years after President Bush declared "mission accomplished," and after we have lost 3,351 troops, the President, last night, vetoed the bill. By doing so, he ignored calls from military experts and the American people for redeployment and the need to make clear to the Iraqis they have to take responsibility for their own future.

The President asked our Nation for patience after the first and second years of this war. Then he asked the American people for more time after the third year, and more time after the fourth year.

This year, the fifth year of the war, he is now again asking us for patience, for the American people to just stand by as more of our young men and women die and as the Iraqis continue to shirk their responsibility for their own country.

It is clear our troops are now policing an open-ended civil war. Now, more than ever, we need a new direction in Iraq. Unfortunately, yesterday, and, sadly, the President vetoed a bill which